



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Healthy Kidneys

National Kidney Month — March 2016

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[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

Kidney disease affects more than one in 10 Americans, yet most people with the condition are unaware that they have it. Nilka Rios-Burrows is a researcher with CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. She's joining us today to discuss ways to maintain healthy kidneys. Welcome to the show, Nilka.

[Nilka Burrows] Thank you.

[Dr. Gaynes] Let's start with what is kidney disease?

[Nilka Burrows] Kidney disease is a condition in which your kidneys are damaged and cannot filter blood as well as healthy kidneys. Because of this, wastes from the blood remain in the body and may cause other health problems. In the United States, more than 20 million adults are estimated to have chronic kidney disease, which is having kidney disease for three months or longer.

[Dr. Gaynes] What symptoms are associated with kidney disease?

[Nilka Burrows] People with kidney disease tend not to have any symptoms. In fact, most people with kidney disease, including those with severe kidney disease, are not aware of their condition. At advanced stages of the disease, when kidneys fail, people may feel tired all the time or they may have swelling because of the fluids accumulating in their bodies. That's why it's so important to stay ahead of the game. If you have diabetes or high blood pressure, or a relative with kidney disease or kidney failure, talk to your doctor about getting tested for kidney disease. Simple blood and urine tests are used to diagnose kidney disease and early diagnosis and treatment will help slow down the progression of the disease.

[Dr. Gaynes] Nilka, what health problems can occur as a result of having kidney disease?

[Nilka Burrows] Kidney disease is serious. It increases your chances of having heart attacks and strokes. It can also lead to other health problems, such as anemia and bone disease. And, if left untreated, kidney disease can lead to kidney failure which requires dialysis or a kidney transplant, and can also lead to early death. Kidney disease is a leading cause of death in the United States.

[Dr. Gaynes] What are the risk factors for kidney disease?

[Nilka Burrows] Your chances of having kidney disease increase with age. In addition to older age, diabetes and high blood pressure are major risk factors for kidney disease.

[Dr. Gaynes] You mentioned the importance of diabetes. Is this a concern for children and adolescents?

[Nilka Burrows] Absolutely. Youth are being increasingly affected by diabetes, type 1 or type 2, placing them at risk of becoming part of the adult population with chronic kidney disease, over time. Onset of diabetes at a young age means longer duration of diabetes in early adulthood and a greater risk for progression of kidney disease.

[Dr. Gaynes] What are some steps we can take to prevent kidney disease?

[Nilka Burrows] Indeed, there are things you can do to prevent kidney disease. If you have diabetes or high blood pressure, keep the blood sugar levels and the blood pressure under control. If you are at risk of developing type 2 diabetes, eat a healthier diet, lose weight, and be more physically active. Talk to your doctor about your risk and how take charge of diabetes and high blood pressure to prevent or delay kidney disease.

[Dr. Gaynes] Nilka, where can listeners get more information about kidney disease?

[Nilka Burrows] Listeners can go to cdc.gov and, in the search box, type “kidney disease.”

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Nilka. I’ve been talking today with CDC’s Nilka Rios-Burrows about ways to maintain healthy kidneys.

Remember, exercise regularly, eat a healthy diet, and lose weight to prevent or delay the onset of kidney disease. Regular physical exams that include simple blood and urine tests can determine if you’re at increased risk for kidney problems.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for A Cup of Health with CDC.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.